THE RELIGIOUS RENASCENCE IN THE MODERN GERMAN NOVEL

BY

ANNA FRANCES ODOR

B. A., University of Kentucky, 1940

M. A., University of Illinois, 1941

AN ABSTRACT OF A THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THE

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I am deeply indebted to Professor Albert W. Aron, whose suggestion I have followed in studying this subject and whose guidance has been indispensable. I am particularly grateful for the painstaking attention and thorough criticism which he gave at the time the thesis was being written.

THE RELIGIOUS RENASCENCE IN THE MODERN GERMAN NOVEL

The problem of religious influences in literature is one of fundamental significance. There are periods when it is of secondary importance, but after every such period there comes the inevitable awakening and revival of religious consciousness. Naturally the tendencies of the revival are reflected in every form of literature, probably most vividly in poetry, which, according to the American philosopher Santayana, is the essence of religion. It is the purpose of this study to show the tendencies as they are reflected in the more significant novels of the first third of the twentieth century.

There has been no formal, comprehensive treatment of this problem with regard to the modern novel, although there are numerous noteworthy studies of religious attitudes in the various literary movements of the period, and writers on individual authors have given much attention to their religious consciousness. One helpful study as background for religious tendencies in modern literature is A. H. Kober's **Die Geschichte der religiösen Dichtung in Deutschland** (1909), which is a survey of the whole problem from the beginning of German literature to 1900. Literary criticism in recent periodicals has often dealt with the growing movement toward the expression of religious feeling in literature. The more valuable of these studies are mentioned in the bibliography.

Religion is a term which has been defined innumerable times, and because of its subjective nature it must be defined by each individual for himself. There are, however, certain general trends and conceptions which are found in most definitions. Among modern theologians the most prevalent definition of religion is that based upon Friedrich Schleiermacher's conception of religion as a feeling of absolute dependence upon a higher being. The psychologist and philosopher William James restates this definition in his work, **The Varieties of Religious Experience**: "Religion shall mean for us the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the deity." In this study the term "religion" is used in this sense.

The religious renascence which has become manifest since the turn of the century is particularly striking when observed in contrast to the highly relativistic nineteenth-century age of philosophical materialism and positivism. In the scientific world the spirit of Darwinism predominated. All creatures and things of the universe were explained through the effects of heredity and environment. There was no place in such a universe for spirit or soul. In the religious world some of the products of the philosophy which prevailed were "higher criticism" and a shaking of the foundations of the old faith, resulting in agnosti-

cism. David Friedrich Strauss, Ernest Renan, Ludwig Feuerbach, and others dared to measure all things, even religious things, by the limits of man's understanding. This new spirit was felt in literary circles, and many of the leading literary figures were frankly and openly agnostic. The literary movements of the late nineteenth century — chiefly realism, naturalism, impressionism—are characterized at least partially by a general disbelief in or regard for things spiritual.

Any such period of disregard for the vast and impenetrable realm of the spirit, as the nineteenth century was, is bound to be followed by a sharp reverse and return to the search after the Absolute. It is interesting that the change has permeated the scientific world as well as the literary world. Such outstanding modern men of science as Sir Arthur Eddington and Sir James Jeans in England and Ernst Planck in Germany readily confess inability to comprehend the universe as a product of natural cause and effect, to the exclusion of any unfathomable mysterious force. In their attitude one may observe tangible evidence of the growing religious consciousness. In the philosophy of Henri Bergson and Theodor Driesch one finds evidence of the influence of this growing consciousness. One may readily discover it not only in Germany, but in France, England, America, in fact, in all of the leading countries of the present day. One of the most striking examples is that of the great English thinker Cyril E. M. Joad, who was long a staunch supporter of the agnosticism prevalent at the turn of the century. He wrote about religion at one time with just as little belief in it as William James, and he was one of the leading exponents of James' philosophy in England. In the last decade he has undergone a startling conversion from unbelief to acceptance of religion as something vital. His very recent book, **God and Evil** (1943), is a complete denunciation of his former scorn of religion; it recognizes and condemns his former religious indifference and is a "testimony" of his change of heart.

In the cultural history of a country, the soul of the people is nowhere better revealed than in its literature. Its thinkers and writers are invariably the mirror of its fundamental tendencies. It is therefore in the field of literature that one may expect to find the clearest reflection of the religious experience of the people. For this reason I have turned my attention to that field; for clarity I have further limited my study to the realm of the novel. A similar study might well be made of modern German poetry and drama. My choice of novels has been restricted to representative works of a small number of authors, who are generally recognized as the outstanding novelists of the twentieth century, and who at the same time are most deeply religious in their philosophies and works. From the novels discussed I have attempted to demonstrate some semblance of a common denominator in the religious thought of the period. This common characteristic is not so much any tangible thought as it is a common attitude, namely the seeking after union with the Universe, the Transcendent, the Divine, God, or whatever name may fit the individual writer's conception. That this attitude may

properly be termed a religious renascence I have demonstrated by comparison of some of the major novels of the period immediately preceding this era with the novels under examination in this study. For obvious reasons this study does not pretend to include all the novels which might be cited as reflecting the recent religious renascence. This would result in an unwieldy mass of material without adding anything important in principle.

The preceding resume is based upon the introduction of the dissertation. The thesis proper is divided into the following chapters, which, with the exception of the first, are devoted to tracing the most important religious tendencies in the novel: 1) Indifference to Religion and the Beginnings of its Renascence; 2) The Theme of the Redeemer; 3) The Theme of the Godseeker; 4) Mysticism in the Modern Novel; and 5) Germanic versus Roman Catholic Christianity in the Modern Novel.

I. Indifference to Religion and the Beginnings of Its Renascence

The attitude of indifference toward religion which was prevalent toward the end of the nineteenth century is well illustrated by Thomas Mann's **Buddenbrooks** (1901), which is one of the outstanding examples of psychological naturalism in German literature. In this work Thomas Mann is the child of his time, skeptical and pessimistic. He believes only in man. His characters are skeptics who believe in nothing beyond the realm of actualities. One distinctive mark of the decadence which **Buddenbrooks** reflects superbly is a general and widespread indifference to religion. Clara Viebig, the chief woman novelist of naturalism in Germany, displays the same indifference to religion which characterizes Mann's early works. When the naturalistic writer concerns himself with religious problems, it is with an attitude of cold, impartial indifference, a "scientific" approach to the problems. An excellent illustration of this is presented in Gerhart Hauptmann's novel of a simple-minded Silesian wanderer, **Der Narr in Christo Emanuel Quint** (1910). Hauptmann's attitude is ever one of completely detached observation; he places the "fool" beneath the relentless focus of his microscope and records his behavior with scrupulous care, not altogether free from irony. Another woman writer of the period, Lulu von Strauss und Torney, often treats religious topics, as in her novels **Lucifer** (1907) and **Der jüngste Tag** (1921), here again with a degree of detachment. Like Hauptmann and Clara Viebig, she never identifies herself with the religious convictions of her characters; she is, however, more sympathetic toward religion than Hauptmann and Clara Viebig.

At least one novelist of the early twentieth century does not employ the detachment characteristic of naturalism. Gustav Frenssen, the author of the best seller, **Jörn Uhl** (1905) and of **Hilligenlei** (1906), affords evidence of the growth of the germ of

revival of religious feeling. In the latter novel, the hero sets out to write a modern interpretation of the life of Christ. His account shows clearly the effect of the "higher criticism" of the nineteenth century and is written in a decidedly rationalistic vein. In spite of this, Frenssen manages to convey genuine religious cosciousness in his characters.

In none of the writers who have been mentioned does one find anything comparable to the great outpouring of religious feeling which characterizes the novels of E. G. Kolbenheyer, Hermann Stehr, and other leading modern novelists. These writers, whose works began to appear in the first decade of the twentieth century, are preeminently concerned with religious problems even in their early works, and they may be regarded as the chief representatives of the revival which is the primary concern of this study. The greatest of these writers is perhaps Hermann Stehr, whose characters are all fundamentally religious. Even his very early novels, **Der begrabene Gott** (1905) and **Drei Nächte** (1909), which appeared contemporaneously with many of the leading works of naturalism and impressionism, are chiefly concerned with restless souls who seek a reconciliation with God.

II. The Theme of the Redeemer

Representative of the theme of the redeemer are novels by Jakob Wassermann, Ernst Wiechert, Herman Stehr, Hans Carossa, Ricarda Huch, and Hermann Hesse. One finds widely suffering, usually by taking upon themselves the burdens of varying conceptions of characters who feel within themselves a mission of relieving the world of some of its unhappiness and others or by pointing out the way to God. This bearing of the burdens of others is one of the fundamental principles of several of the world's great religions, particularly of Christianity and Buddhism. In many cases the characters act from religious motives, while in others the motivation may be purely ethical. It should be made clear that the primary interest in redeemers in this study is not in the Christ-figure. While there have been numerous Christ-novels in recent years, they have fundamentally little to do with the revival of religious feeling. Most of them are fanciful speculations about Christ's return to earth and have a conventional, sermon-like ring. One does encounter a new attitude toward the Christ-figure which is a result of the pseudo-scientific critical attitude toward literature in the nineteenth century. The problem of Christ-novels has been treated in two recent dissertations worthy of mention: Gertrude von Petzold's **Heilandsbilder im deutschen Roman der Gegenwart** (Giessen, 1924) and Jennie A. Whitten's **The Christ-Like Figure in the Modern German Novel** (typewritten, University of Wisconsin, 1934). But it is not so much this more or less conventional Christ-figure which provides the chief evidence of the modern renascence of the Messianic idea. Far more is it an ordinary individual moved by the wretchedness of existence about him and seeking for his brothers (and thereby incidentally for himself as well) a closer harmony with life and with God.

Probably the most striking Messianic figures in modern German literature are those which have been created by Jakob Wassermann. In every one of his major novels one finds a character who seeks somehow to redeem mankind; the character is guided by a sense of a religious mission, by a longing to attain harmony with the world, or with a force which he cannot comprehend but merely feels in his relation to his fellow-man and thus to the universe. Wassermann's character is motivated generally by a deep love for humanity and sympathy with its sufferings. The idea of redeeming through sympathy, pity, and knowledge is expressed by Agathon Geyer, the central figure of both **Die Juden von Zirndorf** (1897) and **Die Geschichte der jungen Renate Fuchs** (1900), and holds for all of Wassermann's redeemer-characters. Arnold Ansorge in **Der Moloch** (1902), Daniel Nothafft toward the end of his career in **Das Gänsemännchen** (1915), the Princess in **Faber oder die verlorenen Jahre** (1924), Josephe in **Ulrike Woytich** (1923): all of these characters express either directly or indirectly a desire to redeem through the fact of their sympathy, through the renunciation of personal glory, achievement, and ambition, and through complete devotion to their fellow-men. But more than any of these, the hero of Wassermann's masterpiece, **Christian Wahnschaffe** (1919), is a truly Messianic figure who devotes his all to the service of mankind. Christian, the pampered, pleasure-loving idol of a pleasure-loving society, undergoes a conversion from his selfish, empty existence and is filled with a burning desire to alleviate suffering; he experiences a transformation from concern for ego to concern for his fellow-sufferer.

Hermann Stehr's most striking redeemer-character is Faber, the hero of **Drei Nachte** (1909), as he appears in **Der Hilligenhof** (1915). The one-time schoolteacher has become a staunch advocate of socialism and a believer in the brotherhood of man. His mission, like Christian Wahnschaffe's and Agathon Geyer's, is to relieve others of their burdens; his theory is that they should be guided to an understanding of their failings and helped to find themselves. He is concerned primarily with the spiritual problems of those whom he helps; he is moved by the unhappiness which ignorance and oppression thrust upon them.

A Messianic character who has more in common with Wassermann's than with Stehr's redeemer-figure is Ernst Wiechert's preacher in **Der Knecht Gottes Andreas Nyland** (1926), who is primarily a seeker after God, but who believes that the way to God lies through one's fellow-man. Like Wassermann's characters, Nyland wants to suffer for others, to bear the burdens of others. This "mission" of his is more openly religious than that of Wassermann's characters, for Andreas is interested in saving mens' souls. His redemptive concern may be contrasted with the mission of Christian Wahnschaffe, who wants to alleviate **all** human suffering,—physical, mental, spiritual. Christian's mission is in keeping with the unlimited, all-embracing conception of humanity, as found in expressionistic literature. Andreas Nyland limits himself to the mission of showing men the path to God.

One novel which has been mentioned in connection with the Christ-novels is Ricarda Huch's **Der wiederkehrende Christus** (1926). It is included here because of the Messianic nature of the chief character, Luzius, who, contrary to the title, does not pretend to be a reincarnation of Christ, although people profess to see Christ in him. The novel takes on added significance as conclusive evidence of the change in Ricarda Huch's religious attitude during and after the war. In her early novels one observes a general indifference, even a certain antagonism to religious matters. Later, in her important critical works (**Luthers Glaube, Der Sinn der Heiligen Schrift, Entpersonlichung**), religion has become a matter of primary importance for her. It is interesting that the hero of her last novel is fundamentally a religious, Messianic figure. His mission is one of love and sympathy. He lacks the convincing reality which Wassermann manages to convey in the character of Christian Wahnschaffe. But such an active desire to live and redeem mankind is indeed a far cry from Ricarda Huch's early passive, decadent characters.

The idea of the doctor as an individual well equipped with Messianic powers in the modern world is a theme which recurs frequently. One of the most successful examples of this is found in Hans Carossa's **Der Arzt Gion** (1931). Here the doctor's motivating force is his great love for humanity; he has a consciousness of duty which is based upon a self-sacrificing, quietly active conception of life. He too is a redeemer, although unlike the redeemers who have thus far been examined, he confines himself to a tiny corner of humanity, to a small circle of patients. There is none of the element of going forth into the depths of civilization's ills and working with unbounded (too often undirected) effort for the good of mankind, such as characterized the works of expressionism. Gion is a redeemer through his optimism. An even more Messianic figure in this novel than Gion is the servant-girl Emerenz, from whom the doctor learns optimism, and through whose courage he regains his faith in the goodness of life.

From these novels one may well draw the conclusion that there is a marked longing in the thought of the post-war period for a redeemer. This is at least one natural manifestation of the search for escape from the frightful pessimism which accompanied defeat in Germany, but since it likewise appears in the victorious countries, it may be regarded also as a general reaction against the materialism of the nineteenth century. The modern novel offers a suitable canvas for the relatively consistent portraits of redeemer-characters and voices the crying need of the post-war generation for a redeemer. The redeemer-theme is one of the strongest tendencies of the religious renascence as it is manifested in the modern novel.

III. The Theme of the Godseeker

The second prominent theme among recent German novelists, which reflects the growing religious consciousness, is the

theme of the Godseeker. Every truly religious man is a seeker after God. The great Godseekers of history — among them St. Augustine, Meister Eckhart, Jakob Böhme—turned ever to the Church as the mediator through which they might find God. The modern Godseeker often casts aside the Church as the "handiwork of man" and sets out upon his own path to God, relying upon a personal consciousness of communion with the Divine. This attitude of the modern Godseeker is one that would have been unthinkable without the influence of the nineteenth century with its pseudo-scientific, materialistic view of religious problems. During the preceding generations the affairs of the spirit had been either ignored or given a new, materialistic interpretation. The weaknesses of established religions had been pointed out more daringly than ever before. From the new, critical, independent point of view the fervently religious spirit, the Godseeker, sets out relatively free of the shackles of orthodoxy, to find his own way to God. In the sudden great number of Godseeking characters which appear in the literature of the early twentieth century one finds very real evidence of the renascence of religious feeling.

The Godseeker is usually an individual who feels himself lost and alone in a society which has somehow turned a deaf ear to the voice of the Divine and has lost its sense of absolute dependence upon God. He may conceive of his seeking as a struggle to feel God within himself, or as a struggle to feel himself one with God, or even as a desire to feel that he does God's will. He may be redeemed, like Wolfram's Parzival, by redeeming others. And like Parzival, he may fail to recognize God at his first encounter, and may even turn against God for a time. But after long wandering in the darkness and constant longing for absolution, with the help of a pure heart he may become, like Parzival, "durch Mitleid wissend" and discover, quite suddenly, the right path to God. He may seek God through closer communion with nature, as St. Francis of Assisi did, or through selfless service of his fellow-man, as Wassermann's redeemer-figures do. In this light the majority of the redeemer-characters which have been mentioned are Godseekers.

One of the earliest really modern Godseekers is Carl Hauptmann's artist in **Einhart der Lachler** (1907). Einhart's life is devoted to the task of finding himself and God within himself. His search is a longing to escape from surface reality into a depth which he only senses, intuits, but cannot put into words; it is a longing for salvation through the divine which is in the human soul. A strange contrast to **Einhart der Lachler** is offered by the Godseeker in Lulu von Strauss und Torney's **Lucifer** (1907), who seeks God and comes to the unhappy conclusion that evil is supreme and that Lucifer, the prince of evil, should be added to the triune God. The astronomer Tycho Brahe in Max Brod's **Tycho Brahes Weg zu Gott** (1915) is a fervent Godseeker, the symbol of the constant longing of the soul for harmony with the universe.

Jakob Wassermann's redeemer-characters are guided in the main by their feeling of sympathy and Christian pity for their fellow-men. They may be regarded as Godseekers only to a limited degree. Only once in Wassermann's works does a character appear who is primarily a Godseeker. This is the figure of Dr. Kerkhoven in his last novel, **Joseph Kerkhovens dritte Existenz** (1933), who, possibly like the author himself, is conscious of the relentless approach of death and is led through this consciousness to a contemplation of God and immortality which is unusual in Wassermann's writings.

In the works of Herman Stehr, one of the greatest modern creators of Godseekers, one is struck by the rarity with which his characters find the harmony which they seek. This may well reflect a great unrest in his own mystic soul, which caused him early in life to cast off the conventional trappings of religion and set out upon his own way to God. In him there is expressed the "Unruhe zu Gott" of the mystic. In him one sees a genuine Godseeker, a man who wrestles with the whole strength of his soul to find God, as did his Silesian spiritual brothers, Jakob Bohme and Angelus Silesius, Godseekers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In every one of Stehr's novels a man or a woman is fervently seeking God; these characters invariably carry the author's own convictions. Marie Exner in **Der begrabene Gott** (1905), Faber in **Drei Nächte** (1909), Sintlinger in **Der Heiligenhof** (1915), the **Geigenmacher** (1926), the tanner in **Nathanael Maechler** (1929): all of these characters have as their primary concern the search for recognition of and harmony with the divine that is in the human soul. Stehr aims to show in his works that every man can attain harmony with the divine spirit which is in his own soul and can find inner peace without withdrawing from the world, for the world is essentially of divine nature.

E. G. Kolbenheyer is just as much a Godseeker as is Stehr. The unifying characteristic of his work is the striving of his characters to harmonize the individual within themselves with the demands of the supra-individual life. In his first novel, **Amor Dei** (1908), the element of Spinoza's nature which Kolbenheyer stresses most is his idea of the constant striving back to God as the condition of all salvation. In **Meister Joachim Pausewang** (1910) the author records the struggle for spiritual freedom of a lowly shoemaker's apprentice, who worked beside Jakob Böhme, the mystic and nature-philosopher. Pausewang's life, as he relates it for his children and his children's children, is a constant longing and striving to grow until he feels God in himself as well as in nature. In a trilogy based upon the career of the great sixteenth-century physician Paracelsus (1917-1926), Kolbenheyer represents him as the man of eternal seeking and never finding, as doctor, Godseeker, preacher, helper of mankind. Here Kolbenheyer presents the chronicle of the longing of a whole people, which drives it into the depths of darkness and up to the heights of enlightenment. In his most recent novel, **Das gottgelobte Herz** (1938 Kolbenheyer delves even farther back into the German past, into the early fourteenth-century age

of mysticism. In the background of this novel of a gentle nun, the figure of Meister Eckhart radiates the spirit of mystic God-seeking which is felt throughout the work. Of all Kolbenheyer's Godseeking characters, the nun Margarete Ebner is the most outspoken example of the individual whose life is devoted first and foremost to the pursuit of the divine in the human soul. One may well conclude that the pursuit of the divine has become more and more a primary concern for Kolbenheyer, for his Paracelsus is more given to the search for God than is his Spinoza, and Margarete Ebner far surpasses either on this score.

In Ernst Wiechert's Andreas Nyland we encounter a man who is first of all a Godseeker, whose life is openly dedicated to the realization of divine consciousness. Unlike the Godseekers in both Stehr and Kolbenheyer, Andreas does not look for God in the depths of his own soul. Rather, he seeks God as an actual, separate Being, whom he hopes to recognize in his fellow-man, if he devotes himself wholeheartedly to the service of his fellow-man. He is ultimately disappointed in man and turns from man to the multiple forces of nature, looking for God in the depths of the forests, in the creatures of the forests. In later novels (**Die kleine Passion** [1929], **Die Magd des Jürgen Doskocil** [1932], **Die Majorin** [1934]), Wiechert's characters are less concerned with an avowed quest for God. They seek rather peace in a calm, rational world and anticipate peace in work and self-effacement. Particularly expressive of the mature Wiechert's growing serenity is the recent novel **Das einfache Leben** (1939). The hero, a retired naval captain, seeks God in a quiet retreat far from the confusion which is modern civilization. The mystic Godseeking which is the core of **Das einfache Leben,** the idea of losing self in the All, contrasts with Stehr's and with Kolbenheyer's Godseeking, in that Wiechert apparently advocates a withdrawal from the world such as is never suggested by the other two writers.

Another important Godseeker is Herman Hesse, for whom the search for God is the search for realization of self. For Hesse, as for Stehr and Carl Hauptmann and Kolbenheyer, the goal of all seeking is the realization of the divine in one's own soul. There are, however, essential variances among these writers in their conceptions of Godseeking. Stehr's conception, for example, includes the possibility of man's finding complete harmony with God in this life as readily as in the next. Carl Hauptmann's Godseeker strives to realize the full nobility of self; he makes little mention of God, but one has the impression that for him the realization of self **is** the realization of God. For Kolbenheyer, seeking God implies seeking to comprehend nature in all its multiplicity and to feel the presence of God in every creature and thing. For Hesse, seeking God involves seeking wisdom; his goal is a mystic withdrawal or **Versenkung** into the All, beyond good and evil, beyond the realities of the external world. His deepest and most serious work is his so-called "indische Dichtung," **Siddhartha** (1922), in which the son of a Brahman wanders in search of wisdom, of enlightenment, and seeks to feel

himself filled with the light and spirit of Buddha. Like the captain in **Das einfache Leben**, he finds in service and deeds the capacity to sense the oneness which for Hesse is God.

From the list of Godseekers which may be made among the most prominent novelists of the twentieth century, the names of two of the best known of modern German novelists are noticeably missing. These are Thomas Mann and Franz Werfel. Mann's recent **Joseph** novels (1933-38) seem to indicate that he is vitally concerned with religious problems, but this is misleading. The Joseph whom Mann presents is in no sense a Godseeker, but rather an individual striving to live an individual's free existence. Avowals on the part of the author that the **Joseph** novels, and even **Der Zauberberg**, are fundamentally religious indicate at least that Mann is fully cognizant of the existence of the present-day religious consciousness. There is, however, in Mann's attitude nothing religious in the sense of the word as it is here used, nothing of a consciousness of absolute dependence upon God. Mann belongs in spirit to the nineteenth-century relativistic world which he paints in **Buddenbrooks.** As for Werfel, one cannot help noticing the complete absence in his novels of the religious feeling which characterizes his earlier, expressionistic poetry. Although he concerns himself with religious problems in at least two novels **Barbara oder die Frömmigkeit** [1929] and **Das Lied von Bernadette** [1942], the story of a saint), he does not identify himself with the convictions of his characters. Of real Godseeking, as it is manifested in Stehr, Hesse, and Kolbenheyer, there is not a trace.

The figure of the German **Gottsucher** takes on varying characteristics, as we have observed, in the hands of various twentieth-century interpreters. The most common characteristic which the Godseeking figures display is the search after God in the depths of the individual soul. The search is based upon the mystic conception of the essential oneness of soul, God, and nature, a conception which dates back to thirteenth- and fourteenth-century mysticism in Christianity, especially as represented by Meister Eckhart. The great number of Godseekers in the twentieth century, as contrasted with the lack of them in the nineteenth century, is a striking manifestation of the decided religious renascence in German literature of recent years.

IV. Mysticism in the Modern Novel

Still another phase of the recent religious renascence, and one closely related to the Godseeker-theme, is the remarkable revival of interest in mysticism which has been so prevalent in England, France, America, and Germany as to warrant special attention. Mysticism has been for centuries an acknowledged characteristic of the German spirit. There have been two high points of mysticism in the history of German thought, namely, the age of Eckhart, Suese, and Tauler in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and the age of Jakob Bohme and Angelus Silesius in the seventeenth century. The mystic is essentially concerned with God and his own soul; if he be undisturbed, he

may readily conform to external ordinances such as to the Church with which he may be connected, even though he may not agree with certain precepts and practices of the Church. Mysticism may be defined as the belief in the possibility of direct intercourse with the divine Spirit, and of a knowledge of God and of spiritual things unattainable by the natural intellect.

Since an important phase of mysticism is the search for God, many of the Godseekers who have been mentioned are likewise mystics. Particularly the characters of Hesse, Stehr, and Kolbenheyer are illustrative of the influence which mysticism has had upon recent literature. Hesse's mysticism is deeply tinged with Buddhist ideas of **Versenkung** and of the dualism of the world. It is a phenomenon of an unfettered soul, a purely personal dependence upon the higher Being. Hesse symbolizes the two sides of human existence, good and evil, one not more important than the other, in the lives of an ascetic monk and a man of the world, in his novel, **Narziss und Goldmund** (1930). Both men have as their goal the attainment of mystic oneness and communion with the divine Spirit.

Hesse's mysticism is relatively free of any historical connections. In the case of Kolbenheyer the historical and philosophical sides of mysticism play an important role; his mystic tendency closely follows that of the great masters of mysticism. He turns for his most serious subject matter to the historical mysticism of Meister Eckhart, of Margarete Ebner and Heinrich von Nordlingen, of Paracelsus and Jakob Böhme. Particularly in **Das gottgelobte Herz**, Kolbenheyer quotes literally the mystic teachings of Eckhart; Margarete Ebner seeks fervently the "unio mystica" of which Eckhart preaches. Eckhart's (and Kolbenheyer's) recognition of the presence of God in the soul is a recognition of the absolute lack of necessity for a mediator of any kind. For Kolbenheyer, as for Lulu von Strauss und Torney, the revived interest in the mysticism of the Middle Ages indicates the presence of a renewed and fervent concern for religion in the present generation.

Kolbenheyer's idea of the presence of God in the human soul likewise finds forceful expression in the works of Stehr, in which the mystic element is one of the basic themes. Stehr too acknowledges the influence of medieval mysticism upon his thought, or at least the concurrence of his own ideas with those of medieval mysticism. From Meister Eckhart there comes the idea in Stehr that complete union with the Supreme Being is entirely possible in this life, as it is in eternity. As for Kolbenheyer, so for Stehr, God represents the eternally creating and growing power. Stehr states that the soul is far deeper than the whole material world, that it is more than Christ with all his words and miracles. The soul is so deep because God is in it. The divine Substance is visible in every creature and returns always and inevitably into the divine Being. Illustrative of mysticism in Stehr is the group of pietists, as well as Sintlinger, in **Der Heiligenhof**. Another example is the striving of the **Geigenmacher** to sink into the depths of his own secret being and thus to come into a consciousness of God's presence.

By no means do all modern novelists show traces of mysticism. Wassermann, for example, shows only a slight tendency in that direction, in his last novel, **Joseph Kerkhoven's dritte Existenz,** in Joseph's recognition of the necessity for feeling the enormous presence of God within oneself, and of the necessity for boundless faith in order to attain this consciousness. Werfel's novels are relatively void of mysticism, as are Thomas Mann's. One does find some influence of mysticism in Carl Hauptmann's novels. For Carl Hauptmann, as for Jakob Bohme, the soul is a great, unbounded, timeless phenomenon and may be seen in all things. Einhart declares: "Die Welt ist Seele"; his life is a constant passionate struggle to discover the actuality of the soul in all things and to attain a sense of oneness with the universe. This is mysticism of a sort, but it remains vague in Carl Hauptmann's hands and lacks the real warmth of religious feeling and intense longing for the God whom Kolbenheyer and Stehr strive to embrace. The real supporters of the mystic tendency in the recent religious renascence are Kolbenheyer and Stehr and, to a lesser extent, Hesse.

V. Germanic versus Roman Catholic Christianity in the Modern Novel

One more tendency of the renascence, which is less widespread than those which have been discussed, is the antagonism to the foreign elements in Christianity, namely, an antagonism to **Roman** Catholicism. This separation of Germanic from **Roman** Catholic elements appears most strikingly in connection with the revival of interest in the Middle Ages and the Reformation. In a recent pamphlet, **Unser Befreiungskampf und die deutsche Dichtkunst,** Kolbenheyer refers to the spiritual struggles of German mysticism and to the Reformation as the "Pubertatsregungen des Germanentums gegen den mediterranen Glaubens - und Gewissenszwang." Decided traces of such an attitude are found throughout the works of Wiechert, Stehr, Wilhelm Schafer, and among the older writers, Gustav Frenssen.

The most consistent advocate of Germanic as opposed to Roman Christianity is the master delineator of the German soul, Kolbenheyer. His is the true Protestant spirit, which he conceives as the Germanic spirit, and his great characters are all Protestant spirits. Even Eckhart, who considered himself a good Catholic, is a "protestant" in his manner of seeking after absolute truth and spiritual freedom. Particularly in Paracelsus, Kolbenheyer has portrayed the Germanic, Protestant spirit in conflict with the foreign, dogmatic, freedom-hampering world of Roman Catholicism, as Kolbenheyer sees it. The closing words of the **Paracelsus**-trilogy, "ECCE INGENIUM TEUTONICUM," summarize Kolbenhēyer's purpose in the work, that of recreating in literature the typically German spirit. The three novels are woven together by a myth symbolizing the conflict between Wotan and Christ, the Germanic and the Mediterranean, with the Ger-

manic in the ascendancy. Kolbenheyer makes clear his idea that at the time of Luther, Christianity had become so dogmatized and so buried "im glasernen Sarg der lateinischen Bildung" (Wilhelm Schafer's expression) that it had lost its warmth and life. It burst forth "aus dem glasernen Latein" (Kolbenheyer's expression) to seek new blood and new warmth in the strong, hardy peoples of the North. It is this "Germanizing" of the Roman Catholic religion, an imported foreign religion, which Kolbenheyer, along with many other modern authors, (e. g., Wilhelm Schafer, Ricarda Huch, Walter von Molo, Hermann Stehr), admires in the Reformation and indeed in the Middle Ages, i. e. the mysticism of the Middle Ages. In Kolbenheyer's myth, to be sure, Wotan foresees a third burial of Christ under the rigorous formalism, which Kolbenheyer senses as the great tragedy of Protestantism as well as of Roman Catholicism. The numerous reinterpretations of the lives of historical religious figures, such as Ricarda Huch's **Luthers Glaube**, Molo's **Mensch Luther**, and Schafer's **Hudreich Zwingli**, are manifestations of the widespread sympathy for that period.

Naturally the tendency toward the Germanizing of Christianity does not exclude the influence of Catholicism from the modern novel. Indeed there are numerous widely-read recent novels by Catholic writers, some of which are essentially religious in tone. In others the only evidence of religion is the use of Catholic settings which do not particularly affect the course of the novels. One cannot speak of a **renascence** of religious feeling among Catholic writers because the current of religious consciousness is ever-present in Catholic literature, as much in one generation as in another. For this reason the works of such prominent Catholic writers as Enrica von Handel-Mazzetti, Jakob Kneip, Leo Weismantel, and Karl Heinrich Waggerl have not been treated in this study. The religious tendencies which appear in their works have nothing to do with the **renascence** of religious feeling, as it is manifested, for example, in the works of the Catholics Stehr and Carossa. The very fact, however, that Catholic Germany is proportionately represented among modern writers for the first time in German literature since the Reformation, and that these writers are widely read, shows to some extent the influence of a revived religious consciousness.

The real renascence of religious feeling finds expression, as I have pointed out, in the frequent appearance in the most important novels in the first third of the twentieth century of the themes of the redeemer, the Godseeker, the mystic, and to a lesser degree, the conflict between Germanic and Roman Catholic Christianity. These are not only the outstanding characteristics of the religious renascence as seen in the recent German novel, they are also the outstanding characteristics of the important recent novels. Insofar as literature reflects life,— and we are convinced that it does,—they are a very real evidence of the widespread twentieth-century renascence of religious feeling which appears in every phase of modern thought and culture.

VITA

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